

RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING DR. MAYA ANGELOU

- WHEREAS,** *Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Ann Johnson on April 4, 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri; and as a young child later moved to Stamps, Arkansas where she was raised by her paternal grandmother; and*
- WHEREAS** *she received her childhood nickname from her beloved brother Bailey who called her “My” for “My Sister” and later after reading a book about the Maya Indians, began to call her Maya and;*
- WHEREAS,** *in her early years Maya attended Mission High School in San Francisco, California where her love for the arts earned her a scholarship to study dance and drama at San Francisco’s Labor School; and*
- WHEREAS,** *after the birth of her son Guy, Maya, a single mother, worked tirelessly doing everything to support her son, however, her passion for poetry, music, dance and theatre would soon lead her to the “big” stage for such performances in the opera production of Porgy and Bess in 1954 and 1955; danced with Alvin Ailey on several television variety shows and by 1957 had recorded her first record album entitled Calypso Lady; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Dr. Angelou exercised her political strengths becoming active in the Civil Rights Movement where she worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcom X and in 1959 at the request of Dr. King, served as the Northern Coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Over the span of her lifetime she has been recognized throughout the world as an American author, poet, and historian, publishing seven autobiographies, three books of essays and countless books of poetry depicting her life experiences and work including titles such as “Mom & Me & Mom” (2013); “Letter to My Daughter” (2008); “All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes” (1986) “Still I Rise” (1978) and one of and her most internationally acclaimed autobiographies, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” (1969) which focused on her childhood life and was nominated for the National Book Award; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Dr. Angelou’s presence as a teacher and a lecturer was demanded internationally; she was invited by several United States Presidents to serve in various capacities such as the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, the Presidential Commission for the International Year of the Woman and at the request of President Bill Clinton, composed the poem On the Pulse of the Morning which she read at his inauguration in 1993;*
- WHEREAS,** *Dr. Angelou received over thirty honorary doctoral degrees granting her the title Dr. Maya Angelou; was honored with the Presidential Medal of the Arts in 2000; received the Ford’s Theatre Lincoln Medal (2008) and in 2011 President Barack Obama awarded her the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.*
- WHEREAS,** *since 1981, Dr. Angelou taught at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where she served as the first lifetime Reynolds Professorship of American Studies; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Dr. Angelou was an outstanding inspiration whose multi-faceted accomplishments included singer, songwriter, actress, playwright, dancer, producer, director, and Grammy Award winner; and*

WHEREAS, Dr. Angelou's spoken and written words will forever touch, encourage and transform the souls of individuals around the world giving them a sense of hope and well-being; and

WHEREAS, on May 28, 2014 at the age of 86, Maya Angelou passed away at her home in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE DURHAM CITY COUNCIL:

- 1. That this City Council pauses in a moment of silence in memory of Dr. Maya Angelou.***
- 2. That this City Council recognizes the life of the phenomenal woman Dr. Maya Angelou for her creative uniqueness, talent and a legacy of literature that will live on forever.***
- 3. That this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of this governing body.***